Sl.No.	Name of the State	1997	2001-02**
25	Tamil Nadu	62	60
26	Tripura	*	NR
27	Uttaranchal	****	251
28	Uttar Pradesh	475	284
29	West Bengal	361	349
	TOTAL :	3508	3642

N.R. Not reported by State.

* Tiger census was not carried out.

** Under compilation/vetting.

*** Only for Namdapha Tiger Reserve.

**** Figures included in undivided State.

† Entire State not covered.

Tiny elephants

†4700. SHRI R.S. GAVAI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the species of tiny elephants have been found in the forests of Kerala;

(b) whether it is also a fact that this was known at the time when the four such elephants have already been killed; and

(c) if so, the steps being taken by the Government for the conservation of the species of tiny elephants?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) No, Sir. There is no scientific evidence regarding the existence of tiny elephants in the forests of Kerala.

(c) Elephant is included in Schedule - I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and gets all necessary protection from the Forest Department in Kerala. The Central Government provides financial support to Kerala under Project Elephant for conservation of elephants. An amount of Rs. 1.67 cr. was released in favour of the State Government during 2004-05. Four

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

elephant reserves, *viz.*, Wayanad, Anamudi, Nilambur and Periyar, have been established in Kerala for focused and systematic management of elephants in the State.

Protection of the interests of Adivasis (Tribals) living in the forests

4701. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the steps being taken by Government for protecting the interest of Adivasis (Tribals) living in forests;

(b) the complete details thereof; and

(c) the view of Government in respect of introducing Forests Rights Act in the Parliament for tribals?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) With a view to protecting the rights of forest dwellers including tribals, on forest land, the Ministry of Environment and Forests has issued guidelines in 1990 for regularisation of eligible encroachments, conversion of forest villages into revenue villages and for settlement of disputed claims and disputes regarding pattas/leases/grants involving forest land. Also, general approval has been granted in respect of tribal areas, under Section-2 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, for underground laying of electricity cables, drinking water supply/pipelines, telephone lines in 2003. In addition, recently in January 2005, general approval has been granted for diversion of not more than one hectare of forest land for executing public utility works like schools, dispensary/hospital, electric and telecommunication lines, drinking water, rainwater harvesting structure, minor irrigation canal, non-conventional sources of energy, skill upgradation/vocational raining centre, power sub-stations, communication posts and police establishments like police stations/outposts/watch towers by Government. The State Governments have also been requested *vide* letter dated 21.12.2004 not to resort to eviction of tribals and forest dwellers other than ineligible encroachers, till the complete survey is done for verification of rights of such people. So far, encroachments over 3.66 lakh hectare of forest land in eight State, have been regularised and 384 forest villages in two States have been converted into revenue villages. The people living in and around forests are already enjoying usufructory rights in respect of collection of minor forest produce, for their *bonafide* use. Also, the State Governments have been advised to bring about a legislation conferring ownership rights in respect of minor